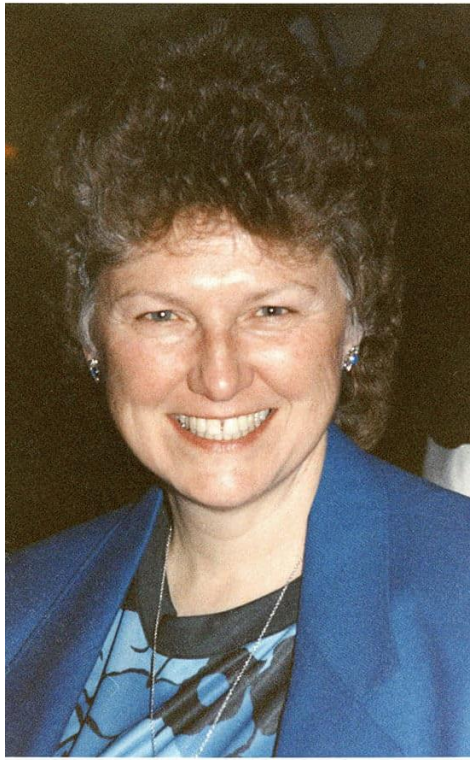
neuac

NATIONAL ENERGY & UTILITY AFFORDABILITY COALITION

2020 Annual Conference
UNITED WE STAND

NEUAC History Vignette:
The Legacy of Sister Patricia Ann Kelley
"The Mother Teresa of St. Louis"





Sister Pat Kelley (June 22, 1936 – September 27, 1987, a member of the Sisters of Charity order, based in St. Louis, Missouri is credited as the "founding mother" of the national effort to advocate for energy assistance.

Sister Pat Kelley started Missouri EnergyCare to address the aftermath of an extreme Midwest heatwave in the summer of 1980.

Her efforts eventually led to the formation of the National Fuel Funds Network, taking her cause and followers to the halls of Congress to advocate for energy assistance funding.

NFFN merged with the National Low Income Energy Consortium (NLIEC) in 2014 to Form the National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC).



A life dedicated to service

During her professional life, Sister Pat worked as a teacher, vocational counselor and volunteer probation and parole officer in hospitals and in pastoral service.

After 25 years of religious life, Sister Pat went to Sedona, Arizona in 1980 for a yearlong retreat. She returned determined to devote the rest of her life to helping the poor and elderly.





ENERGYCARE
Saving Lives By Degrees

In March 1981 Sister Pat was selected to administer a one-year $20,000 grant from the National Council of Senior Citizens. The grant established "Missouri Project EnergyCare" to assist limited- and fixed-income elderly with energy related needs.

By 1983, just two years after it was established, funding for Missouri Project EnergyCare ceased. In September of that year, Sr. Pat continued the work she had begun by founding Missouri EnergyCare, Inc. as an independent nonprofit organization. She served as the organization's president and executive director.



Mission: EnergyCare promotes healthier, safer home environments and independent living by providing year-round energy-related services in St. Louis communities for low-income households with persons who are elderly, disabled, or chronically ill, and young children.

ENERGYCARE
Saving Lives By Degrees

EnergyCare values:

All people as responsible human beings

Our clients' desire for self-determination and independence

Social responsibility, financial accountability and good stewardship

Interpersonal relationships with all stakeholders

Conservation of natural resources

EnergyCare vision:

Continually strive to meet energy-related needs of the community it serves

Empower clients through education

Advocate for client's needs

Draw attention to the energy-related needs of the people we serve

Improve our clients' quality of life by promoting efficient use of energy in the home

Promote human dignity through personal interaction with the people we serve

Provide services that are a model of collaboration.



NEUAC honors the legacy of Sister Pat Kelley by bestowing an annual award in her honor to a person with exemplary achievement in furthering NEUAC's objectives of increasing public awareness of low-income energy problems, advancing energy assistance policy, and promoting charitable energy assistance.

Missouri EnergyCare eventually spurred the creation of the National Fuel Funds Network and later NEUAC, with a mission to advocate for energy assistance.



Nun uses persuasive powers to help St. Louis' poor, elderly

By PAUL NOWELL
Associated Press Writer

ST. LOUIS (AP) – Katharine Stevenson, a 74-year-old widow, was nearly $500 behind on her gas bill and the weather was near zero. She needed help fast.

A social worker referred her to Sister Patricia Kelley, a 47-year-old Irish Catholic nun who is a persuasive advocate for the poor.

"Sister Kelley gave me $300 and they kept my gas on. I was so grateful. No one ever helped me out before," Mrs. Stevenson, who has high blood pressure and arthritis, said of the January incident. "I spent three months without heat last year because my gas was cut off."

Sister Kelley is executive director of Missouri Energycare Inc., a non-profit organization that helps the needy pay emergency utility bills. Her agency, the only one of its kind in the state, relies entirely on contributions and receives no government funds.

"We do a lot of begging," she said in an interview at her basement office in the Saum Hotel in south St. Louis. "We try to get everything we can for free, then we stretch it as far as possible."

Her office, for example, was donated by the hotel owner. The furniture is on loan from a local utility.

"I'M LIVING the way nuns have always lived," she said. "We're very creative and innovative. I've picked up a lot through osmosis."

(AP photo)

Sister Patricia Kelley, a 47-year-old Irish Catholic nun, runs Missouri Energycare Inc., a unique agency that helps the poor pay their utility bills. The agency receives no government support and Sister Pat says she must use "creativity" in her search for funds.



Gone home too soon…

On Monday September 28, 1987, Sister Pat was found murdered in her office. Her life was cut short by an act of senseless violence.

News of her death made headlines. A St. Louis Post-Dispatch editorial stated that “she raised not only money – she also raised the consciousness of those who could make a difference in the plight of those who too often have to do without.”





Past Sister Patricia A. Kelley Award Winners

2010	David Parker, American Gas Association
2011	Patricia Wrice, Operation Fuel, Inc.
2012	David Carroll, APPRISE
2013	Cindy Datig, Dollar Energy
	Joe Guarinello, HeartShare Human Services
2014	Olivia Wein, National Consumer Law Center
2015	Mary Ellen Vanni, Fuel Fund of Maryland
2016	Skip Arnold, Energy Outreach Colorado
2017	Lou Gonzales, Florida Power and Light
2018	Jacqueline Berger, APPRISE
2019	Tanya Jones, HeartShare Human Services



Congratulations David Rinebolt

Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy
2020 Sister Pat Kelley Awardee



David Rinebolt has fought for vulnerable populations for 35+ years through energy assistance programs. He founded Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy in 1996 and is in his second stint as executive director (1996-2014; 2019-present). David fiercely advocates for Ohio's limited income citizens.

His accomplishments include:

- Program Manager; U.S. DOE WAP - implemented updated technical standards; increased program production by 20 percent –
- Oversees seven Ohio utilities programs; three fuel funds; $14 million budget
- OPAE members helped low income Ohioans save 15,755,162.00 kWh in energy; weatherized 11,204 homes (2019)
- Secured increased funding for Ohio's energy assistance programs (2019)

Thank you for your years of service and devotion to the causes championed by Sister Pat Kelley. NEUAC looks forward to presenting your award next year in San Diego where you can be formally



Sister Patricia Ann Kelley



We rise by lifting others.

~Robert Ingersoll

Sources

Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word
EnergyCare Missouri
Chicago Tribune: March 7, 1988
Memorial - Sister Patricia Ann Kelley

